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"BARBARA FREITCHIE."

Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth Tells How Whittier Came to Write the Poem.

Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, the popular novelist, lives in a picturesque house on the heights of Georgetown, overlooking the Potomac. The authoress, who was a life-long friend of John G. Whittier, told the reporter to-day an interesting story of her connection with the writing of the Quaker poet's famous ballad of "Barbara Freitchie."

"In September, 1863," said Mrs. Southworth, "a Mr. C. S. Ramsburg, a neighbor of mine, related to my son Richmond and myself the story of Stonewall Jackson's raid through Maryland the previous year and his passage through Frederick, telling us how old Barbara Freitchie, a connection of Mr. Ramsburg, hung out from her window the Stars and Stripes, and how they were shot down. If I remember rightly, Barbara was at the time more than ninety years old.

"The town was about equally divided between sympathizers with the Union and the Confederacy. Barbara was a stanch Unionist, and when, on hearing of the approach of Stonewall Jackson and his army, the Unionists of the town hid their flags, the brave old lady nailed a small American flag to a staff and placed it at her window. Jackson came riding in at the head of his men and, seeing the flag, ordered them to shoot it down. They did so and the flag fell. It was then that Barbara caught the flag up and, leaning far out of her window, waved it high above Jackson's head, crying out to him: 'Shoot me if you dare, but spare the flag.' Jackson halted, looked up at the brave old lady, and to the everlasting glory of the man and soldier, ordered his men to 'march on.' That was about the way the incident was related to me by Mrs. Ramsburg," said Mrs. Southworth, "and upon my son remarking: 'What a grand subject for a poem by Whittier, mother,' I sat down and wrote to Mr. Whittier, telling him the story and acquainting him with my son's suggestion. I received an early reply, which was as follows:

"AMESBURY, 9 mo., 8th, 1863.

"'MY DEAR MRS. SOUTHWORTH: I heartily thank thee for thy very kind letter and its enclosed "message." It ought to have fallen into better hands, but I have just written out a little ballad of "Barbara Freitchie," which will appear in the next *Atlantic*. If it is good for anything thee deserve all the credit of it. I wish I could accept thy kind invitation to thy pleasant cottage home, but I am too much of an invalid to undertake the journey. I thank thee none the less, however, for asking me. I shall go there in imagination if I cannot otherwise.

"'With best wishes for thy health and happiness, I am, most truly thy F. D.,

"'JOHN WHITTIER.'

"We corresponded for many years," continued Mrs. Southworth, "and when I sent him the story of 'Barbara Freitchie,' I wrote him that I considered it a message from the spirit world. Barbara died, if I remember correctly, shortly after the incident related, and therefore never had the pleasure of reading Mr. Whittier's beautiful lines, which first appeared, I think, in the *Atlantic* of October, 1863."—*N. Y. Sun.*